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CG tube in at least two directions, and

wherein the slide is adapted to move the latch element from outside the support

tube.

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REMARKS

*Summary of the Amendment*

Upon entry of the above amendment, the specification will have been amended, claim 33 will have been canceled, and claims 26, 27, 29, 31, 34-36, 51-54 and 57 will have been amended. Accordingly, claims 1-58 will be pending with claims 1, 26, 27, 29, 31, 36, 47, 51 and 57 being independent.

*Summary of the Official Action*

In the instant Office Action, the Examiner has indicated that claims 1-25 and 47-50 are allowed and that claims 27-45 and 51-56 contain allowable subject matter and would be allowable if written in independent form and amended to overcome the formal rejection. Further, the Examiner has withdrawn the previous restriction requirement, objected to claim 53 and rejected claims 27, 28, 31-35, 51-56 and 58 as indefinite. Finally, the Examiner rejected claims 26, 46, 57 and 58 over the applied art of record. By the present amendment and remarks, Applicant submits that the rejection is improper and respectfully request

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reconsideration of the outstanding Office Action and allowance of the present application.

***Acknowledgment of Allowable Subject Matter***

Applicant acknowledges and appreciates the Examiner's indication that claims 1-25 and 47-50 are allowed and that claims 27-45 and 51-56 contain allowable subject matter and would be allowable if written in independent form. Accordingly, as Applicant has presented claims 27, 29, 31 and 36 in independent form and addressed the indefiniteness of each of the claims indicated by the Examiner as being indefinite, Applicant requests that claims 27-45 and 51-56 be indicated to be allowed.

***Withdrawal of Restriction Requirement***

Applicant acknowledges and greatly appreciates the Examiner's indication that the previous restriction requirement is withdrawn and that all claims would be examined.

***Traversal of the Objection to the Claims***

The Examiner objected to claim 53 because it recites "a connection element." The Examiner suggested that this feature be renamed as "a connecting element." The Examiner also suggested that the specification be amended consistent with this change. Reconsideration of this objection is respectfully requested.

Applicant notes that this feature has been clearly shown and described in the specification as a connection element and not as a connecting element. Accordingly, Applicant believes that the specification is clear in regards to what feature is being claimed and that it is unnecessary and unhelpful to change the claim and the specification in the requested manner. Applicant reminds the Examiner that Applicant may be his own lexicographer, and that he may use any term which enables one of ordinary skill in the art to understand the invention, provided it is not repugnant to its ordinary meaning.

While Applicant appreciates the Examiner's well intentioned suggestion, Applicant submits that the term is proper and respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw this objection.

***Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 112, Second Paragraph is Moot***

Claims 27, 28, 31-35, 51-56 and 58 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite.

With regard to claims 27 and 33, the Examiner asserted that the claims are indefinite because the slide is not disposed within the support. Applicant disagrees. Applicant directs the Examiner's attention to Figs. 8-11 and notes that 11' constitutes an inner part of the slide 11 which is within the tube 2 and which retains the latch element 5'.

With regard to claim 31, the Examiner asserted that the claim is indefinite because

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it recites a rod like member. Applicant disagrees. Applicant directs the Examiner's attention to Figs. 9 and notes that 5' constitutes the rod like member.

With regard to claim 51, the Examiner asserted that the claim is indefinite because the linkage element does not move in Figs. 8-17. Applicant disagrees. Applicant directs the Examiner's attention to Figs. 8-17 wherein it is clear that linkage element 6' rotates with fork tube 3.

With regard to claim 51, the Examiner asserted that the claim is indefinite because the Examiner was uncertain what features cooperate. Applicant directs the Examiner's attention to Fig. 12 and the specification page 17, lines 3-7 wherein it makes clear that the at least one stop 7 cooperates with, e.g., engages with, the stop 26 of the bearing support 15'.

With regard to claims 52-55, Applicant has amended these claims to address their asserted indefiniteness.

With regard to claim 58, the Examiner asserted that the claim is indefinite because it recites a rod like member. Applicant disagrees. Applicant directs the Examiner's attention to Figs. 9 and notes that 5' constitutes the rod like member.

Thus, it is believed that each issue indicated by the Examiner has been addressed. Accordingly, the rejections have been rendered moot and the Examiner is requested to withdraw the indefiniteness rejections.

***Traversal of Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b), is moot***

Applicant submits that the rejection of claims 26 and 46 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) as being anticipated by US patent 591,864 to MEYER is moot.

The Examiner asserted that this document discloses all the recited features of these claims. Applicants respectfully traverses this rejection.

By this amendment and in order to advance prosecution, Applicant has amended independent claim 26 to substantially recite the features of claim 33, which was indicated by the Examiner to be allowable over the applied art of record. Accordingly, as Applicant has specifically amended claim 26 to recite features which were indicated to define over this document and as claim 46 depends from claim 26, in an effort to advance prosecution, these claims are believed allowable at least for this reason.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection and further requests that the above noted claims be indicated as allowable.

***Traversal of Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)***

Applicant traverses the rejection of claims 57 and 58 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over US patent 6,082,754 to JEUNET et al. in view of MEYER.

The Examiner asserted that JEUNET teaches all of the claimed features except for an enclosed fork tube. However, the Examiner explained that MEYER teaches the use of an

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enclosed tube, and that it would have been obvious to combine the teachings of these documents in order to render the invention obvious. Applicant respectfully traverses the Examiner's conclusion and this rejection.

Applicant submits that no proper combination of JEUNET and MEYER discloses or suggests the invention as defined by at least amended independent claim 57. Notwithstanding the Office Action assertions as to what each of these documents disclose or suggest, Applicant submits that each of JEUNET and MEYER fails to disclose or suggest, inter alia, that the slide is adapted to move the latch element *from outside* the support tube, as recited in amended independent claim 57.

Applicant notes that JEUNET is merely directed to a mechanism for locking the steering system of a child's cycle. However, as acknowledged by the Examiner, JEUNET lacks the enclosed support tube.

Moreover, MEYER is directed to a cycle steering system wherein the fork is locked when a user takes his hands off the handle-bar. However, it is clear from the Figures of this document that there is no disclosure to a slide which is adapted to move the latch element *from outside* the support tube, as recited in amended independent claim 57.

Accordingly, because it is not apparent that either JEUNET and MEYER discloses or suggests that the slide is adapted to move the latch element *from outside* the support tube, as recited in amended independent claim 57, Applicant submits that no proper combination

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of these documents can render unpatentable the combination of features recited in at least independent claim 57.

Furthermore, Applicant submits that there is no motivation or rationale disclosed or suggested in the art to combine JEUNET and MEYER in the manner asserted by the Examiner or to include features which were disregarded by the Examiner. Nor does the Examiner's opinion provide a proper basis for these features or for the motivation to modify these documents, in the manner suggested by the Examiner. Therefore, Applicant submits that the invention as recited in at least independent claim 57 is not rendered obvious by any reasonable combination of these disclosures.

Further, Applicant submits that claim 58 is allowable at least for the reason that this claim depends from an allowable base claim and because this claim recites additional features that further define the present invention. In particular, Applicant submits that no proper combination of JEUNET and MEYER discloses or suggests, in combination: that the latch element comprises a rod-like member as recited in claim 58.

Accordingly, Applicant requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejection of the above-noted claims under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) and indicate that these claims are allowable.

#### CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that none of the references of record, either

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taken alone or in any proper combination thereof, anticipate or render obvious Applicant's invention, as recited in each of claims 1-58. The claims have been amended to eliminate any arguable basis under section 112, second paragraph. Additionally, the applied references of record have been discussed and distinguished, while significant claimed features of the present invention have been pointed out.

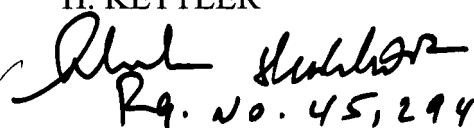
Further, any amendments to the claims which have been made in this response and which have not been specifically noted to overcome a rejection based upon the prior art, should be considered to have been made for a purpose unrelated to patentability, and no estoppel should be deemed to attach thereto.

Accordingly, reconsideration of the outstanding Office Action and allowance of the present application and all the claims therein are respectfully requested and now believed to be appropriate.

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Attachment: Appendices 1-4

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**APPENDIX 1**

*Changes to the two paragraphs beginning on line 13 of page 14 and ending on line 2 of page 15 of the specification:*

Support tube 2 also has formed therein a longitudinal slot 9 through which a connection element 10 extends or passes. This connection element 10 is connected to a slide 11 and linkage element 6. The connection may be via a screw 20 (see Figs. 2 and 4) or other conventional connecting mechanism. In the illustrated embodiment, connection element 10 is integrally connected to or formed with slide 11 and extends in a recess 21 of linkage element 6. However, connection element 10 and slide 11 may be made as separate components which are joined or secured together by any conventional attachment technique including a screw or threaded element.

On its front upper portion, linkage element 6 comprises two symmetrical opposite attachments or stops 12. Each of these stops 12 may be provided with lateral stop surfaces 7. When viewed from the top, these attachments or stops 12 are designed in a manner of a segment of a partial circle (pie shaped or wedge shaped), so that four stop surfaces 7 are formed, with each one being arranged in symmetry with one another. Of course, stops 12 may be separately formed and attached to linkage element 6 instead of being integrally formed therewith, as is shown.

**APPENDIX 2**

*Changes to the paragraph beginning on line 19 of page 15 and ending on line 3 of page 16 of the specification:*

When it is desired to lock the handlebar in a set position, latch element 5 is pressed or forced into recesses 13. This engagement occurs when locking element 8, which is disposed on linkage element 6, is pushed upwards by slide 11. Recesses [8] 13 also utilize inclined inlet surfaces because they act as guiding lead-in surfaces which facilitate entry of pin 5 into recess [8] 13. In the locked state, which is shown in Figs. 4 and 5, a steering movement thus becomes impossible since the handlebar or fork tube 3 is locked in a single direction. Figs 2 and 3 show a downwardly displaced condition of linkage element 6 in which latch element 5 is in a position which it does not cooperate with the locking element 8. As a result, in this position fork tube 3 and handlebar are free to rotate until latch element 5 abuts on stop surfaces 7, this range of movement or rotation corresponding to a steering angle range.

**APPENDIX 3**

*Changes to the paragraph between lines 10-16 on page 17 of the specification:*

As can further be seen from the top view of Fig. 12, linkage element 6' comprises two lateral stop surfaces 7 which are angularly spaced apart from each other. This design is such that a downwardly oriented attachment or stop 26 (see Figs. 8 to 11) of the bearing 15', which is connected to support tube 2 [for rotation therewith], forms a steering limitation of plus/minus approximately 45°. Of course, as with the previous embodiment, the range of steering limitation can be designed to any desired range.

**APPENDIX 4**

*Changes to claims 26, 27, 29, 31, 34-36, 51-54 and 57:*

26. (Amended) A vehicle steering head including a support tube which rotatably supports therein a fork tube to which a wheel fork and a handlebar can be secured, the steering head comprising:

a latch element disposed within the support tube, the latch element being moveable in a direction which is substantially parallel to an axis of the fork tube; and

a linkage element connected to the fork tube so as to rotate therewith, the linkage element comprising at least one stop surface;

wherein the at least one stop surface limits the rotation of the fork tube with respect to the support tube,

wherein the latch element is connected to a slide, the slide being disposed within the support tube.

27. (Amended) [The steering head of claim 26,] A vehicle steering head including a support tube which rotatably supports therein a fork tube to which a wheel fork and a handlebar can be secured, the steering head comprising:

a latch element disposed within the support tube, the latch element being moveable in a direction which is substantially parallel to an axis of the fork tube; and

a linkage element connected to the fork tube so as to rotate therewith, the linkage element comprising at least one stop surface;

wherein the at least one stop surface limits the rotation of the fork tube with respect to the support tube, and

further comprising a slide, wherein the slide is disposed within the support tube and retains the latch element.

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29. (Amended) [The steering head of claim 26,] A vehicle steering head including a support tube which rotatably supports therein a fork tube to which a wheel fork and a handlebar can be secured, the steering head comprising:

a latch element disposed within the support tube, the latch element being moveable in a direction which is substantially parallel to an axis of the fork tube; and

a linkage element connected to the fork tube so as to rotate therewith, the linkage element comprising at least one stop surface;

wherein the at least one stop surface limits the rotation of the fork tube with respect to the support tube, and

wherein the linkage element comprises a mudguard.

31. (Amended) [The steering head of claim 26,] A vehicle steering head including a support tube which rotatably supports therein a fork tube to which a wheel fork and a handlebar can be secured, the steering head comprising:

a latch element disposed within the support tube, the latch element being moveable in a direction which is substantially parallel to an axis of the fork tube; and

a linkage element connected to the fork tube so as to rotate therewith, the linkage element comprising at least one stop surface;

wherein the at least one stop surface limits the rotation of the fork tube with respect to the support tube, and

wherein the latch element comprises a rod like member which is arranged substantially parallel to the axis of the fork tube.

34. (Amended) The steering head of claim [33] 26, wherein the slide is moveable substantially parallel to the axis of the fork tube.

35. (Amended) The steering head of claim [33] 26, wherein a locking element is

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connected to the slide.

36. (Amended) [The steering head of claim 26,] A vehicle steering head including a support tube which rotatably supports therein a fork tube to which a wheel fork and a handlebar can be secured, the steering head comprising:

a latch element disposed within the support tube, the latch element being moveable in a direction which is substantially parallel to an axis of the fork tube; and

a linkage element connected to the fork tube so as to rotate therewith, the linkage element comprising at least one stop surface;

wherein the at least one stop surface limits the rotation of the fork tube with respect to the support tube, and

further comprising a bearing support disposed on at least one end of the support tube.

51. (Amended) A vehicle steering head including a support tube and fork tube which is rotatably mounted with respect to the support tube, the steering head comprising:

an upper bearing support disposed at an upper end of the support tube;

a lower bearing support disposed at a lower end of the support tube, the lower bearing support comprising at least one stop surface;

the fork tube comprising a fork end, a handlebar, and a latch element which is slidably disposed adjacent the fork tube between the fork end and the handlebar end, the latch element being disposed within the support tube;

a linkage element moveably disposed adjacent the lower support bearing, the linkage element comprising at least one stop surface for engaging the at least one stop surface of the lower bearing support and comprising a recess for receiving the latch element;

wherein the [linkage] latch element is moveable in a direction which is substantially parallel to an axis of the fork tube from a first position where the latch element engages only

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the lower bearing support and where the at least one stop of the lower bearing support cooperates with the at least one stop of the linkage element to limit the rotational movement of the fork tube to a second position where the latch element releasably engages a recess in the linkage element whereby the fork tube is prevented from rotating in any direction.

52. (Amended) The steering head of claim 51, wherein the [linkage] latch element is moveable from outside the support tube via a slide.

53. (Amended) The steering head of claim 52, wherein the slide is connected to the [linkage] latch element via a connection element, the connection element passing through a longitudinal slot in the support tube.

54. (Amended) The steering head of claim 53, wherein the longitudinal slot limits the movement of one of the [linkage] latch element or the slide.

55. (Amended) The steering head of claim 51, wherein the [linkage] latch element further comprises at least one locking element for engaging a locking recess in the lower bearing support.

57. (Amended) A vehicle steering head comprising:  
a fork tube adapted to engage a handlebar;  
a support tube which rotatably supports the fork tube;  
a latch element disposed within the support tube; and  
a slide which is moveable with respect to the support tube,  
wherein the slide is moveable from at least one position wherein linkage element prevents the fork tube from rotating with respect to the support tube to at least another position wherein the linkage element allows the fork tube to rotate with respect to the support

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tube in at least two directions, and

wherein the slide is adapted to move the latch element from outside the support tube.